

Class Struggle

The Workers' Republic Women's Liberation International Socialism

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Group

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Workers to Battle Stations! NO DEAL!

Demonstrate Outside
ICTU Conference on
Nov. 19th!

The ICTU leaders, are engaged in a calculated fraud. Deliberately, they are setting out to tie the hands of workers in the Republic while Haughey dismantles the gains of thirty years of struggle and social development.

Brazenly the ICTU offered itself as the fourth partner to the new coalition of the three capitalist parties, an alliance which makes Fianna Fáil the most formidable government of capitalist austerity ever known in this state.

The ICTU misleaders are doing for Fianna Fáil now what Fianna Fáil's election manifesto did for it prior to the February election. They are aiding Haughey to peddle a tissue of lies and false promises on jobs and national recovery as a cover for continuing with savage attacks on workers' living standards.

The Union leaders claim to have won a commitment to accelerate job creation. A more bare-faced contempt for the intelligence of Irish workers can hardly be imagined. The Deal says that the 'objective' will be 20,000 new jobs per year. It says explicitly that "The offsetting trend in job losses cannot be foreseen accurately." - apart from the 10-20,000 redundancies the state itself has promised to inflict in the first of three years of cuts! So what's new? In spite of 17,000 'new jobs' a year in the past period, unemployment has increased steadily to 18.5%. The new package of cuts, will actually retard the rate of economic growth.

But there is one ingredient that is new in this Deal, probably the only one we can rely on the union leaders to fight to enforce. It is a very specific commitment to ban the right to strike of organised workers — for up to three and a half years! In return, an annual 2.5% wage "increase" is promised, subject to ability to pay. It is a guaranteed wage cut because inflation is officially expected to top 3.5% next year. It is less than the amounts workers have been winning without any national deal!

The trade union officialdom will pull out all the stops to have the deal ratified by the union rank and file with the minimum of debate. The major unions are circulating the Deal with recommendations to accept.

But the fraud is not guaranteed to succeed! The hollowness of the whole charade was exposed for all to see within days. For, four days later

the Government at last had to deliver on their Book of Estimates for the coming year. All along the union leaders had known this. All along they had wanted to deliver their deal before the hard financial facts of the next round of cuts would be announced. It suited Haughey this way too, and he gambled with immense confidence on the utterly supine and cowardly subservience of his new honorary cabinet - the ICTU. They would not repudiate the deal no matter how terrible its consequences.

After all, that had been their purpose in entering into the deal — to

biguous in the Deal is the explicit ruling out of any increase whatever in holiday entitlements!

Workers will certainly take note of the Labour Party leadership's attacks on the union leaders' sell-out. How times have changed for hypocrite Spring and his cronies whose own Coalition with Fine Gael disarmed the whole movement politically and acted as the thin end of the wedge for the cuts! They will give no lead whatever in a real fight to reject or smash the deal. The Workers Party's muted criticism confirms its own roots in sections of the union bu-

sive protest and lobby at the special conference of the ICTU on November 19th. They must be left with no illusions that this sell-out is going unchallenged, and, whatever the outcome, resistance against their treachery will grow. We call on all organisations of the Labour movement, community groups, unemployed organisations, students and women's organisations to rally on that day.

ORGANISE THE RANK & FILE

Build resistance to every detail of the cuts and fight for nationally-coordinated action to win reversal of the

role and their social respectability in bourgeois society.

But the role the union leaders are now playing may turn out to be gravedigger for the organised workers movement if they are not effectively challenged right from now!

SAVAGE NEW CUTS

Just four days after his National Programme was launched, Haughey announced £485 millions in cuts for next year out of a national budget of about £8,000 millions. Estimates of job losses involved range between 8,000 and 20,000. Local services will disappear, be privatised or carry new charges.

A crumbling public health system will be dealt another savage blow, hard on a year when delays for surgery meant amputation of a leg rather than timely treatment for one recent case of gangrene. Empty wards are locked up and patients unhygienically huddled in overcrowded wards and corridors — and all that months before winter takes its toll of the aged.

2,500 teachers' posts are to be cut in this first of three years of similar cuts. No new schools, larger classes throughout and huge fee rises for third-level students. School-bus funds cut by 19%!

Having guaranteed at least a 5% increase in unemployment, it was a sick joke for Haughey then to boast of a 1% 'increase' in the social welfare total — to offset the expected 3.5% inflation?!

The uniformed forces of the state who enforce the rule of capital, private property and imperialist interests in Ireland, is the one sector that escapes the cuts!

Spending on roads and houses is massively cut. Gone is the National Social Services Council without which local welfare advice volunteers have no backup or training. And along with these goes a purge of the many state agencies that have brought technology and science into Irish social and economic life. Gone are the Health Education Bureau, the Physical Planning Institute — Foras Forbartha — and the Agricultural Institute AFT, as well as half the funds of numerous agencies in the arts, adult education and community care. Cuts in funds to agricultural research and advisory services will be implemented by way of one thousand redundancies in a merged AFT and ACOT!

Union leaders claim to have agreed that all such redundancies must be 'voluntary'. But the fraudulent Programme for National Recovery only commits the government to consultation in the event of needing to impose compulsory redundancies. Another deception that will not be long coming to light for all to see.

Already the LGPSU national executive, despite Philip Flynn's determination to sell the deal, have refused to recommend it to members. They fear the anger of their members at being singled out for savage cuts in jobs and services in health and local councils.



Haughey and his ITGWU lieutenant. Give Carroll cause to look over his shoulder!

Photos by Derek Speirs/Report

escape from having to openly fight the ruling class austerity programme. That is why their silence on the book of estimates has been deafening. They know only too well that every word of criticism they utter will undermine their efforts to sell the pay deal.

The pay "rise" is seen by most workers to be derisory, and the promised tax concessions over three years will never be noticed in workers' pay packets.

The only other concrete 'promise' in the Deal is that a 39-hour week for those on 40 hours or more will be discussed over a three-year period. It commits the bosses to nothing as it is hedged with qualifications about costs. Yet the Irish industrial worker is among the top three worldwide in the hours s/he has to work for a living wage. Far more emphatic and unam-

reaucracy and its impotence as a serious force for struggle against the Deal and the cuts..

Nevertheless, militants must openly demand that the Labour and Workers' Party should put their feet where their mouth is and fight to mobilise opposition to the deal and all the attacks which it seeks to camouflage.

•VOTE NO— Fight for open democratic workplace debate on the terms. Circulate leaflets to counter the massive weight of the bureaucracy's official propaganda and to counter the weight of the capitalist press and state media. The fight for a decisive no vote can begin to turn the tide against the defeatist spirit of the bureaucracy.

• FOR A MASS PROTEST — Militants must mobilise for a mas-

sive protest and lobby at the special conference of the ICTU on November 19th. They must be left with no illusions that this sell-out is going unchallenged, and, whatever the outcome, resistance against their treachery will grow.

Such a movement must openly challenge and replace the present leadership and policies. Their policy of collaboration with Fianna Fáil must be exposed for what it is. FWUI's Attley claims without this collaboration the union movement would be "marginalised". What he means is that he and his fellow bureaucrats felt themselves being marginalised. They were unwilling to lead their members into a fight that would challenge the 'good' order of capitalist society and at the same time they were being bypassed by governments that were determined to push through the cuts with or without them.

By offering to help police the rank and file in the "national interest" the bureaucracy have ensured their own

EDITORIAL

A LEAD IS URGENTLY NEEDED TO ORGANISE THE RANK AND FILE AGAINST UNION LEADERS' SELLOUTS

Almost 20 years have elapsed since the post-war period of economic expansion began to give way to recession and instability on a global scale. In that time the attempts of the capitalist ruling class to offload their crisis of profitability on workers and their families were initially met in Ireland with widespread trade union action, often unofficial, which blunted the drive for wage restraint.

No fighting leadership emerged, however, at a political level in the working class. Indeed, Labour, the supposed party of the trade unions, squandered all the gains of the previous period in brazen collaboration with the capitalist parties.

From 1977 to 1982 the historic divisions in the ruling class weakened their ability to impose on workers the kind of austerity that the profit logic of capitalism demanded. The pressures of workers' struggles, in the context of competition between the bourgeois parties, and the eagerness of imperialist finance capital to mortgage the Irish economy, led to large-scale borrowing by successive governments of Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael-Labour.

That growing indebtedness came home to roost, however, in the austerity measures of the Coalition Government of 1982-86 which actually prepared the way for the final onslaught by an alliance of all the capitalist parties in 1987. To this alliance the trade union leaders have offered their fullest possible collaboration to save the capitalist system at workers' expense.

It is clear that, despite the sporadic outbursts of resistance by workers as in the ESB, health services, Sugar Company etc., the proud tradition of spontaneous trade union militancy is incapable of coherently resisting the methodical, centralised and brutal offensive being currently mounted by the Irish bailiffs of international capitalism.

Less than ever now can we rely upon spontaneous trade union militancy to generalise the kind of fightback that is so desperately needed if all the gains of 30 years of struggle are not to be wiped out within the life of the present government.

The needs of the working class urgently demand a conscious initiative and lead from class-conscious and socialist militants.

The Irish Workers Group does not yet have the forces to *organise* the kind of campaign that is needed at this crucial moment, to begin to turn the tide. But we believe that such a lead can emerge from militants among the groups of workers most immediately threatened with large-scale redundancies and cuts.

We call on such militants to reach out to others in similar situations throughout the ranks of our class. We urge them to declare openly their willingness to fight, by bringing out their workplace sections in demonstrations and protests against the cuts, wage restraint and the collaboration of the union bureaucracy. On that basis there can be set in train the steps towards a fighting conference of rank and file delegates from workplaces, the unemployed and the communities.

The IWG declares its willingness to cooperate with any section of workers and the left in campaigning to begin the necessary fightback, notwithstanding our many political differences with other groups.

We welcome and urge support for any open democratic debate and real action that might flow from the CPI's appeal to Labour, SF and WP to join in resistance to the cuts; or from the Dublin meeting called under the name of trade unionists against the cuts.

Unity in action is a duty, irrespective of political differences. Above all, *action* is a duty — real direct action of self-organised workers, to resist all attacks concretely, to smash *class collaboration* by the unions and to demand *restoration of all the budget cuts*.

Such a struggle must go beyond the limits of mere trade union bargaining. Its every step forward poses the need for new forms of mass rank and file organisation among workers.

On this basis alone can the path of struggle from the immediate defence of our gains lead to a challenge to the very foundations of the capitalist system.

It is in that perspective, of a fight for working class power, in the tradition of Bolshevism and the Russian revolution of 70 years ago, that IWG issues this call to action!

Special Branch Hands off Journalists!

Class Struggle protests at the Special Branch harassment of Derek Speirs, the NUJ photo-journalist whose pictures in this and many other journals have so vividly recorded events of significance to Irish workers, socialists and Republicans.

Their 8-strong raid on his studio was a calculated act of intimidation. It was an invasion of a journalist's right to professional confidentiality on foot of an utterly groundless warrant. On the absurd claim that they were investigating a recent kidnapping, they claimed the right to search for bodies or guns but in fact went through his photographs.

We condemn this as one more of the many thousands of criminal acts of harassment by this noxious 'security' organisation of the bosses' state.

Open protest by organised workers against such acts of harassment is vital if our class is to resist the deadly threat of state repression.

Published by the Irish Workers Group

Irish Section of the MRCI, the
Movement for a Revolutionary Communist International

Labour Left claims victory but ...

Spring still in control!

The Labour Party conference took place in Cork with Labour out of Coalition. This was its first Conference for two years. Last year's conference had been put off by the Labour leadership in an attempt to prevent anger over the party's role in coalition from threatening the Government.

The conference occurred in a context where the bosses' parties, now organised in an effective Coalition in the Dail, have thrown down the gauntlet to the Irish working class in the form of an offensive of unprecedented savagery on social services, jobs and wages. The Conference, therefore, became a real test for the Left as to how far they were prepared to go in challenging the Right who, in Coalition, had set in motion the austerity programme which the Haughey Government is now continuing and stepping up.

The Right had succeeded at Labour's last conference in 1985 in avoiding a debate on Coalitionism and Labour's record. Rather than the left, including the "Trotskyist" Militant, fighting on the principle of anti-coalitionism at the '85 conference and in the struggles of the class, they spinelessly submitted to Spring's manoeuvre for a Commission on electoral strategy. The report of this commission was put before this year's conference by the Administrative Council for adoption.

The key thing about the Report is that it in no way breaks with Coalitionism. It states unambiguously

"Our medium term goal... requires that the Party fight all elections on the basis of its independent policies and remain independent of all Governments save in those rare circumstances where national conference decides that exceptional national concerns dictate otherwise in order to defend the interests of our electorate." [Page 2 of 'Report - Selected Quotes']

What is this but Coalitionism in cold storage? The first sign of real instability for the Fianna Fail government, in a climate of growing world recession, will offer Spring &

Co their "exceptional national concern" to do their "democratic duty". Yet even the rising star of the left - Emmet Stagg - voted for the Report despite warning delegates of the danger of Coalitionism "waiting in the wings". This is a measure of how seriously the Lefts are willing to do battle with the Right on an issue of fundamental principle.

The mettle of the left

to bureaucratically railroad through a "one member-one vote" method of choosing the leader. The aim of this is to maintain the dis-enfranchisement of conference on the Labour leadership issue. This way Spring can at least hope to atomise the electoral process, and snow under the conference and the most active members with the right wing and most passive forces. With the help of the left Spring

such a fight. Their only principle is to avoid being forced out of the Labour Party. On the most vital women's issue of the moment, Militant's resolution failed to attempt to commit Labour to *active* support of the Clinics Defence Campaign. On the North they opposed the Anglo Irish Agreement but with the opportunist argument that it would inflame loyalist bigotry.

A serious balance-sheet of the conference can only conclude that the left occupy no fundamentally stronger position as regards control of the party. Despite winning a number of secondary positions the balance of power is still firmly in favour of the old guard. Why?

Because despite tactical differences the left share with the right a fundamental commitment to parliamentarism. Any extra-parliamentary action is for the left - as for the right - an appendage to this. The manoeuvring on questions of principle, outlined above, to seek short-term organisational advantage against the right merely strengthens the latter's hand at the end of the day.

Few either in the Labour Party or outside of it will be fooled by the Labour leader's 'left face'. But to those in the Labour Party who do believe this, we say: Fight to force the Labour leaders to go further than radical speechifying in the Dail.

Fight to force them to actively support all struggles of workers and the oppressed against the offensive of the bosses on jobs, social services, wages, democratic rights etc, while not holding back for them to act.

Fight to turn labour out to the working class it claims to represent, in a mass struggle to link up rank and file workers across the unions, in a fight against all the above attacks - whether or not the union officials agree.

Let the Labour leaders be exposed alongside the union bureaucracy as enemies within our class if they shirk this battle.



Deputy EMMET STAGG

Photo by Derek Speirs / Report

was again put to the test over their attempt to widen the basis on which the Labour leader is elected. Hitherto he was chosen by the parliamentary party only. The left at Cork sought to challenge this principle without having the courage to openly confront the current leadership, and its record in coalition, by putting forward their own candidate. Instead Stagg and Co. repeatedly stated that Spring's leadership was not at issue.

Not surprisingly, then, Spring adroitly conceded the principle at issue - the election of the Leader - as a means of buying time for the Right before any change would occur. The delegates were left in no doubt however that Spring and Co would use this time

thus managed to outwit his opponents.

The centrists of Militant offered no real alternative to the left reformists. On the issue of the leader they too conceded that Spring's leadership was not in question. On the attack on youth - the new Labour Youth constitution imposed by the A.C. with the aim of drastically restricting the independence of Labour Youth - Militant had already sold the pass way back in '85 by not mobilising against Spring's imposed hack as national youth development officer.

The large vote to refer back the leadership's new Youth Constitution revealed a potential basis for a real fight. Militant lack any perspective or guts for

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Write for information about the IWG and the MRCI of which IWG is a section, to J.Larkin, c/o 12 Langrishe Place, Dublin 1.

The stock exchange is the biggest gambling den in capitalism. Imagine a single casino where, on a single day, over 200 million bets are placed worth billions of dollars. Wall Street is such a casino.

It would be wrong however to see the stock exchange as purely a den for speculation. Stock exchanges first emerged to help capitalism grow. Individual capitalists themselves did not have enough money to pay for factories large enough or to buy the newest inventions and use the most economic techniques of production. They had to pool their capital. The stock exchanges became a means to do so. New companies were floated on these exchanges and investors could subscribe to part of the capital of any new venture - a share. It entitled the holder to a part of any future profits (dividends).

The bigger the new venture grew, the more its profits tended to grow. As a result the price of their shares also tended to go up because they represented a share of a growing pile of profit. The rise in share prices attracted speculators like moths to a flame but they were not so much interested in the profits these shares earned but in buying and selling them to earn a quick buck by anticipating the movement of prices.

Speculators

From institutions necessary to raise capital for companies, the stock exchanges became increasingly dens for speculators, trying to manipulate prices, with scant regard for the real economy of production and consumption.

In the wake of the recovery from the last world recession in 1982, the world's stock market prices began to rise again. They rose steadily to a peak of three times their 1982 level. This rise is called a bull market.

The problem for capitalism was that this boom, whilst a sign of renewed confidence in its prospects, was not based on a lasting and deep recovery in the real economy. In the last few years the level of profits has increased due to the defeats of workers but the rate of profit was still low compared to the previous decade. This meant that re-investment of profits in new capacity or machinery remained low, barely three-quarters of its 1970s level. So what then was to happen with all these new found profits?

Capitalist Casino

If they were not going into investment, then they could only go into speculation. The stock markets began to boom as demand bid up prices.

U.S. Economy

The stock exchange was not the only casino in the early 1980s. The U.S.A.'s economy expanded faster than the rest of the world, an expansion based on arms and consumer spending fueled by credit expansion. This sucked in billions of dollars in imports while export performance remained weak as compared to West Germany and Japan. This resulted in the U.S. dollar being in less demand and foreign currencies being in more demand in order to pay for these imports.

Thus, the price of the dollar fell. Speculators were soon drawn into the foreign currency exchange markets. At one time over 40 billion dollars a day was being spent on foreign exchange as speculators tried to make another fast buck out of the currency exchange movements. In addition, the treasuries of each imperialist nation, fearful of another recession and confident of containing workers' demands began to provide bank loans for this speculative spree. Money supplies grew at the fastest rate since the second World War. Savings in the U.S.A. fell to under 3%, their lowest recorded level in history. Personal debt rose to 20% of income, also the highest since records began.

Debt Crisis

Of course, this spiral of debt and rising prices did rebound on the economy. Not only did the speculators work hard, but they played hard. They needed to be entertained with cars, videos, compact disks, cameras. All these luxury goods were in great demand and South Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan, chief purveyors of these tempting goods, found themselves doing very nicely as expected in the consumer boom. But what of the real economy below? Since 1985 investment tended to fall with the partial exception of the U.S.A. With few new factories being built, there has been little

demand for power, steel, raw materials etc. So, while South Korea boomed, traditional raw materials suppliers like Zambia, Brazil, and the Middle East increasingly stagnated. The debt crisis refused to go away. The low level of investment meant that the world capitalist production also faltered.

Poor Profit Growth

In the last two years, industrial production in major capitalist countries has grown by less than 2% a

and productivity has led to poor profit growth since 1985. In Japan, profits are down by 30% since the beginning of this year. Germany has also experienced a similar fall.

Only in the U.S.A. and Britain have profits risen, mainly due to their weak currencies. In the U.S.A. profits have risen by 7% since January and in Britain, excluding oil, they are up 8 per cent. On the whole, profits world-wide have hardly grown in the last two years. And it's this lack of profit growth that has

yielded a 12% return in dividends. By the peak a few weeks ago, each share yielded a mere 4%, which is less than the rate of inflation.

In Japan, the speculative boom outdid every other nation. Over there, the growth of speculative holdings grew by nearly one and a half times as fast as the wealth produced in the economy last year. So high has the Tokyo stock exchange risen that its total value exceeds that of Wall Street, despite the Japanese economy being less than half the size of the U.S.A. Little wonder then, that shares Tokyo yield an unbelievably low dividend - 1.3 %. A crash on Tokyo would dwarf that of Wall Street. With yields getting lower and lower, many speculators began to get cold feet.

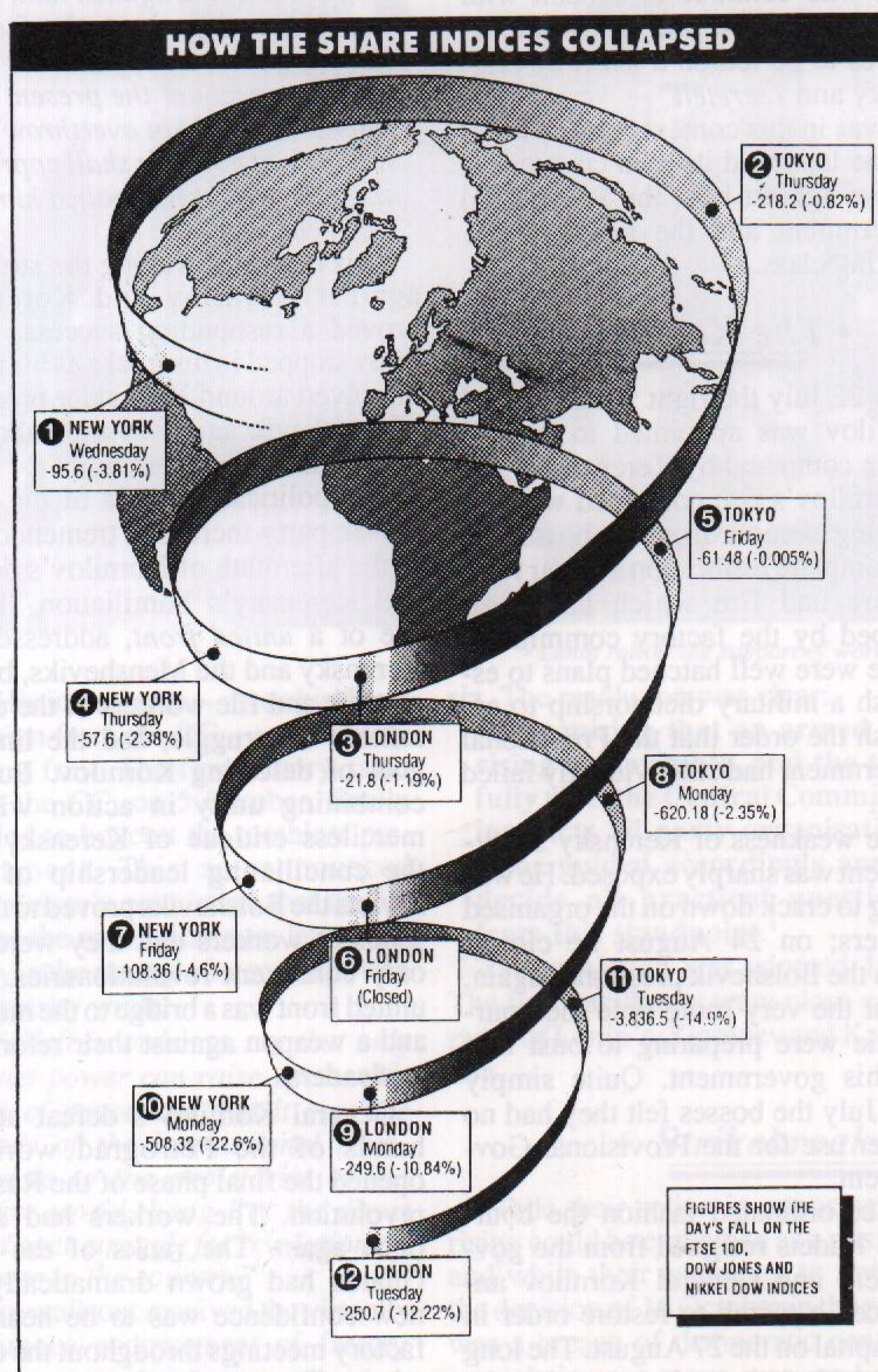
By the end of the summer holidays in September, the markets were getting increasingly nervous. Fewer shares changed hands and the markets became more volatile. The markets began to pay more attention to the real world. What was ignored a year ago now became a horror story.

Suddenly fragile markets were seized with fear over the 5 year old U.S. trade deficit and budget deficit. Interest rates started to rise again in the U.S.A. as they must if the Government is to find foreign takers for its stocks to finance the deficit. But interest rate rises threatened to contract the credit boom which has helped fuel speculation on the stock market prices. So they panicked.

Bear Market

Nor is it over, while yields in Europe and America have improved somewhat, they remain exceedingly low in the Far East, particularly Japan. Most speculators are now resigned to the fact that there are in an indefinite bear market (a falling prices market).

The crash, therefore, marks a turning point. It has severely deflated the largest speculative bubble in history and accelerated the tendency leading to recession. Workers do not need to speculate on the future. If the recession bites, the world bosses will try and make us pay. The only historic choice for workers is to fight for the kind of economy that will grow and grow without fear of crisis, in an economy controlled by workers, producing for need, not profits - socialism.



year - far below the 1950s and 60s and only comparable to the recession-wracked decade of the 1970's.

This lack of investment resulting in shallow increases in employment

impelled the boom in speculation.

Let's take Wall Street. Since 1982 tax profits have grown less than 10%, some of the share prices have jumped 300%. In 1982, shares

Answering Sinn Féin?

On Oct 2nd, Republicanism and Socialism contested each other in debate in a packed CIE Hall in Dublin. It was an important debate, notwithstanding the philistine ridicule with which it was afterwards dismissed by the Republicans' own paper APRN (Oct 8th).

Eoin Bennett for Sinn Féin claimed the support of the Communist International of Lenin's time (1919-23) for his assertion that national revolution against imperialism in this century no longer had a capitalist content.

Eamonn McCann for the SWM argued the exact opposite, that the class character of the Irish Republican struggle against British imperialism today had not changed in essence since the revolutionary bourgeoisie of the 1790s. Republicanism today continued to struggle for bourgeois-democratic goals on the basis of a class-alliance which would tear itself apart along class lines sooner than fight to abolish Irish capitalism.

McCann's case, however, failed to address the important features that distinguish Sinn Féin's petty-bourgeois revolutionary nationalism from that of the revolutionary-bourgeois movements of earlier

periods. Among these is the important fact that Sinn Féin's outlook can be strongly opposed to the Irish ruling class while its actual programme is incapable of fighting to overthrow capitalism.

• Communist International

Eoin Bennet's attempt to enlist Lenin and the Comintern was a gross misrepresentation of the historical facts, left unanswered by the SWM. He argued that the Second Congress of the Communist International in 1920 had abandoned the term "bourgeois-democratic" as a description for the anti-colonial struggles and had substituted instead the term "national revolutionary". This, he claimed, recognised that such struggles were no longer to be seen as bourgeois but as opposed to the bourgeoisie internationally and to capitalism at home as well. Such struggles, he claimed no longer had a capitalist content.

Anyone who reads Lenin's

Theses on the National and Colonial Question presented to the Comintern in August 1920 will find no shortage of references to and warnings about the "bourgeois democratic" nature of the national revolutionary movements. Lenin emphasises:

"the need for a determined struggle against attempts to give a communist colouring to bourgeois-democratic liberation trends in the backward countries; the Communist International should support bourgeois-democratic national movements in colonial and backward countries only on condition that, in these countries, the elements of the future proletarian parties, which will be communist not only in name, are brought together and trained to understand their special tasks, i.e., those of the struggle against the bourgeois democratic movements within their own nations. The Communist International must enter into a temporary alliance with bourgeois democracy in the colonial and backward countries, but should not merge with it, and should under all circumstances uphold the inde-

pendence of the proletarian movement even if it is in its most embryonic form" (thesis 11; *Theses Resolutions and Manifestos of the First Four Congresses of the Third International*. Ink Links 1980. p.80)

The Fourth Congress in 1922 further developed this method in the tactic of the 'Anti-Imperialist United Front' and warned against

"the representatives of bourgeois nationalism ... adapting to the class instinct of the workers give their bourgeois-democratic aspirations a 'socialist' or a 'Communist' guise, in order - though they may not themselves be aware of it - to divert the first embryonic proletarian groups from the real tasks of a class organisation" (p.413)

• Semi-Colonial Ireland

McCann correctly indicted Sinn Féin for its treacherous courtship of Fianna Fáil and the SDLP on a pan-nationalist basis. However, in demonstrating the contempt of

these bourgeois 'republican' parties for the national struggle he toppled over into almost completely writing off any central relevance of the national struggle to the tasks facing the Irish working class majority today. He claimed that the Southern state is no longer imperialized but is a country whose own native "multinational companies" are now engaged in "exploiting the labour of workers internationally". This muddled theory of the Southern state leads to important programmatic errors.

• Economism

He argued that the socialist revolution could only begin from the class struggle of workers against the Southern capitalist state for their social and economic needs. He added that the sectarian division of workers in the North could only be addressed "on a class basis" - through unity in economic struggle. Later he denied holding this view and asserted that the

protestant workers must of course be won to oppose imperialism. But he offered no clue as to what perspective or what programme of strategy and tactics could concretely guide militant workers in bringing the working class to the head of the struggle against imperialism.

An IWG speaker from the floor supported McCann's basic critique of Sinn Féin but argued that the SWM's perspectives and programme were abstract, one-sided and rooted in mistaken theoretical assumptions.

SWM's economistic perspective wrongly ruled out the national struggle as one potential starting point for revolutionary developments for the working class.

To build a revolutionary socialist party in Ireland socialists would have to be crystal clear on the distinction between the different class programmes of Republicanism and Socialism. At the same time they would have to consciously fight for principled tactics to combine the unresolved tasks of national revolution with the struggle for the class rule of the workers in the nation as a whole.

OCTOBER REVOLUTION THE ROAD TO POWER

THE FEBRUARY REVOLUTION, which overthrew the Tsar had ushered in an inherently unstable period of dual power. The bourgeoisie, through the Provisional Government, held formal control over the state apparatus. But they did so only with the permission of the workers', soldiers' and peasants' soviets — the embryo of another state power.

The bourgeoisie lived, breathed and tried to rule only by courtesy of the reformist leaders of the soviets, the Mensheviks and the right wing of the peasant-based Social Revolutionaries (SRs).

The dual power became less and less acceptable as the months wore on, to both the bosses and the working masses. This created crisis after crisis. One way or the other it had to be resolved. Either the bourgeoisie would impose a military dictator to crush the revolution, or the workers would lead society out of its impasse by establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat.

By the autumn of 1917 this was the stark choice facing the classes in Russia. It was the objective precondition for the insurrection.

Subsequent history has shown all too often however that favourable objective conditions — an acute revolutionary crisis — do not on their own guarantee the victory of the proletariat. This was shown with tragic consequences in Chile, Iran and Portugal. To mobilise the proletariat for the direct struggle for power a conscious leadership is required, — a revolutionary party, armed with the correct programme, tactics and strategy and prepared to arm itself and the class with rifles too.

• Turning the Tide

The Russian workers, particularly those in Petrograd, had suffered a very real setback after the defeats of the July Days. The Bolshevik leadership was arrested or forced into exile. Circulation of the party press was halved after July with the central organ having a circulation of only 50,000 in August. The mood in the factories was often despondent.

Yet by September and October, the tide had turned decisively in favour of the Bolsheviks. After years in exile or underground, after months as the intransigent left minority in the soviets and after the persecution suffered in July the Bolsheviks at last proved themselves to be the party of the Russian working class.

Before July the Bolsheviks had established themselves as the leadership in several key fighting units of the working class. In the August city council elections in Petrograd they chalked up majorities in proletarian districts of Peterhof, and Vyborg. Their influence in the factory committees had increased, with 82% of the delegates at the August all-Russian factory committee conference endorsing their call for soviet power.

On 11 August the Bolsheviks led a general strike in Moscow against the State Conference. Kerensky had hoped to use this gathering to consolidate his coalition with the bourgeoisie and the military chiefs. That self same strike had been opposed by the conciliator leadership of the Moscow soviet.

That the workers were not prepared to make their peace with the bourgeoisie or the Provisional government was demonstrated by a resolution from the young workers of Putilov in which they expressed:

"our profound scorn for the Social Revolutionaries (SRs) and Mensheviks who continue to cohabit with the bourgeoisie and allow themselves to be led on a leash by Kerensky and Tsereteli"

It was in this context that the bourgeoisie launched its own counter-offensive against both the Provisional Government and the gains of the working class.

• The Kornilov Coup

On 22 July the right wing General Kornilov was appointed to the supreme command by Kerensky.

Kornilov's rise coincided with increasing clamour from the bosses for the complete restoration of their right to hire and fire which had been usurped by the factory committees. There were well hatched plans to establish a military dictatorship to establish the order that the Provisional Government had still evidently failed to do.

The weakness of Kerensky's government was sharply exposed. He was trying to crack down on the organised workers; on 24 August he closed down the Bolshevik press once again. Yet at the very same time the bourgeoisie were preparing to oust him and his government. Quite simply after July the bosses felt they had no further use for the Provisional Government.

In co-ordinated fashion the bourgeois Kadets resigned from the government and General Kornilov announced a march to restore order in the capital on the 27 August. The long depressed stock market soared as the capitalists looked forward to the counter-revolution's victory.

Everything the Bolsheviks had been predicting about the role of the conciliator Mensheviks and Kerensky was being verified by the march of events. These traitors to the working class had been allowing the forces of counter-revolution the chance to re-gather their strength and strike back. The party was now put to the test of fighting the counter-revolution.

Kornilov's march on Petrograd shattered the post July order in the factories. Meetings vowed to defend the city and demanded arms to do so from the Soviet executive.

Thousands of Petrograd workers threw themselves into the struggle to stop Kornilov, at least 25,000 enlisted for the Red Guards who were co-ordinated by the Soviet's Military Revolutionary Committee.

Kerensky cowered behind the proletarian wall defending Red Petrograd. In the short term he had no alternative. Bolshevik leaders were released from jail and Bolshevik propaganda and agitation was in free flow again. Bolshevik militants were prominent in all the mobilisations to halt Kornilov. The problem for the Bolsheviks was how to use these mobilisations to win the mass of the workers away from their trust in the Mensheviks and in the wretched Kerensky, how to intensify the contradictions between the rank and file Mensheviks and SRs and their compromised leaders?

In denying military 'strong man' Kornilov the right to overthrow Kerensky, Lenin was in fact digging Kerensky's political grave, and the graves of those who sought to compromise with him. As Lenin put it:

"We are changing the form of our struggle against Kerensky. Without in the least relaxing our hostility towards him, without taking back a single word said against him, without renouncing the task of overthrowing him, we say that we must take into account the present situation. We shall not overthrow Kerensky right now. We shall approach the task of fighting against him in a different way."

This means of waging the struggle against Kornilov and Kerensky proved a resounding success. Kornilov stopped in his tracks as his army dissolved around him under pressure of Bolshevik agitators and sabotage by militant railway workers.

The political fortunes of the Bolshevik party increased tremendously in the aftermath of Kornilov's defeat and Kerensky's humiliation. Their use of a *united front*, addressed to Kerensky and the Mensheviks, based on rank and file workers in the committees of struggle, had the limited goal of defeating Kornilov. But by combining unity in action with a merciless critique of Kerensky and the conciliating leadership of the soviets the Bolsheviks proved to thousands of workers that they were the only consistent revolutionaries. The united front was a bridge to the masses and a weapon against their reformist misleaders.

General Kornilov's defeat at the hands of the Petrograd workers opened the final phase of the Russian revolution. The workers had arms once again. The ranks of the Red Guards had grown dramatically. A new confidence was to be heard in factory meetings throughout the capital city. Factory after factory replaced their Menshevik or SR delegates to the soviet with Bolsheviks. Resolution after resolution passed at mass meetings in early September took up the Bolshevik call for all power to pass to the soviets and challenge the soviet leadership's collaboration with the Kerensky government.

• Change in Mood

While Kerensky tried to strengthen his power by establishing a five person directorate the Menshevik leadership still continued to support him in exchange for a promise to convene a pre-parliament. The tension between the aspirations of the proletarian mass and the intentions of those they had once delegated to represent them was increasing dramatically.

In September the Petrograd Soviet passed its first distinctively Bolshevik resolution calling for a government of 'the revolutionary proletariat and peasantry'. In opposition the Mensheviks could only muster 15 votes out of 1,000 delegates in support of the Provisional Government! The Moscow Soviet passed a Bolshevik resolution four days later.

The other contenders for proletarian leadership either withered and declined, as was the case with the Mensheviks, or they were gripped by splits and instability. The SR Party split, with the Left SRs supporting the calls for soviet power against their ex-leaders. The bulk of the Petrograd SR organisation backed the Lefts, reflect-

ing the mood of Red Petrograd.

It was the growing identification of the most active workers with the Bolshevik Party that marked the most important change in the mood of the working class. Tireless agitation and propaganda to expose the treachery of the soviet leadership was now beginning to bear fruit. By October Bolshevik Party membership stood at 250,000 compared to around 30,000 at the beginning of the year. In Petrograd the Bolsheviks could count 43,000 members in their ranks of whom 28,250 were workers and 5,800 soldiers. The overwhelming bulk of the party was proletarian.

The bulk of the intelligentsia inevitably abandoned the banner of the proletariat as the hour of decision drew close. The party intellectuals — the finest intellects in Russia and much of Europe — stuck by the working class. Their talents were at the service of the proletarian party.

The party was truly becoming the national party of the Russian working class. In Saratov in the Volga it took leadership of the soviet in September, as it was to do in the majority of Soviets across Russia's far flung industrial centres. These facts, stubborn facts that bourgeois historians have

socialism."

The slim chance for this compromise lay in the fact that workers were distrustful in the extreme of the bourgeoisie in the aftermath of Kornilov. Their pressure was a material factor. It could perhaps, be exerted to the point where the Mensheviks and SRs would be forced to make some sort of break — at least formally — with the chief capitalist party, the Kadets.

But before the ink was dry on the article he had written Lenin received news that Kerensky was planning to form a five-person Directory, and strengthen his drive to establish a Bonapartist dictatorship for the bourgeoisie. Even now the Mensheviks and SRs refused to consider the proposal for a 'socialist' only government based on the soviets within which the Bolsheviks would accept the role of loyal opposition. Upon receipt of this news Lenin suggested re-titling his article *Belated Thoughts*. He wrote:

"Perhaps the few days in which a peaceful development was still possible have passed too. Yes, to all appearances, they have already passed."

Henceforth Lenin concentrated his thoughts on how to take the revolution forward under Bolshevik leadership. In less than a fortnight he concluded that the rising was an immediate necessity. Over the following weeks Lenin fought a relentless struggle to win the Bolsheviks to this perspective. He quickly grasped that in a matter of weeks the objective situation had dramatically changed. He fought to change the party accordingly. He struggled to make the subjective factor equal to the tasks of the objective situation.



• Workers storm the Winter Palace

• Land War

The crisis of the dual power situation intensified on every front during September and October. In the countryside, as the days of the harvest passed, the peasant masses renewed their ferocious war against the landowners. The agrarian question, which Trotsky called the 'subsoil of the revolution' acquired decisive importance. Traditionally the peasants' looked to the SRs as their representatives. Yet the SRs were openly collaborating with the landowners. The Provisional Government, of which the SRs were an integral part declared in September — as instances of violence against the landowners rose from 440 in August, to 958 — that:

"... all must experience alarm over the disorders which were happening everywhere in the wildest forms."

• Reformists Refuse

Immediately after the Kornilov affair Lenin expressed the belief that a peaceful development of the revolution was once again possible. In his article *On Compromises* Lenin explained that if 'All Power to the Soviets' could be realised forthwith, that is, if the Menshevik and SR leaders in the Soviets could be forced by the pressure of the masses to break from the bourgeoisie then:

"In all probability it could secure the peaceful advance of the whole Russian Revolution, and provide exceptionally good chances for great strides in the world movement towards peace and the victory of

The pitchforks that pierced the overfed guts of the landowners worried the SRs far more than the cruel land hunger that condemned the poor peasantry to misery. All the SRs could offer the peasants was that on an unspecified day a Constituent Assembly, which the bourgeoisie were successfully preventing from being convened, would solve the land question. Unimpressed, the peasants continued their land war. October saw 42.1% of all instances of land seizure since the fall of the Tsar.

The peasant land war, spurned by the SRs and opposed by the bourgeoisie, had found a natural ally in the proletariat's revolutionary struggle. This in turn immeasurably strengthened the proletariat as the leader of all the oppressed and downtrodden in Russia. As Trotsky put it:

"In order that the peasant might clear and fence his land, the worker had to stand at the head of the state: that is the simplest formula for the October Revolution."

• Nationalities

The land war and the struggle of the proletariat were also increasingly enmeshed with a wave of struggles for autonomy from the nationalities imprisoned within the Tsarist empire. In the East Bashkirs and Kasakhs fought for autonomy as a means of getting land. Throughout the lands of the empire national struggles erupted and were directed against Kerensky's dithering Provisional Government. Moreover, the phenomenal spread of soviets throughout the nationalities increasingly meant that autonomy became identified with soviet power.

Amongst the soldiers, sailors and workers the continuation of the war and the threat of famine increased mass hostility to Kerensky.

The Baltic fleet was dominated by the Bolsheviks. Garrison after garrison followed them. As we have seen, the Soviets began to return ever more convincing Bolshevik majorities as the crisis deepened. This process of radicalisation was well underway by early September. Indeed when some Bolsheviks saw Lenin's *On Compromises* they were indignant that a rightist course was being proposed.

Slutsky, from the Petrograd Committee, argued on 7 September:

"As in the factories, so among the poverty stricken peasants we see movement leftwards... For us to consider compromises now is ludicrous. No compromises!... Our task is to clarify our position and to prepare unconditionally for a military clash."

• To the Factories and Barracks

In fact Lenin himself was quickly moving towards the same conclusion. The crisis had matured. Delay would prove fatal. The Bolsheviks must launch the insurrection.

Lenin's views were communicated to the Central Committee (CC) in a number of letters and discussed on 15 September. Lenin argued that the forthcoming Democratic Conference to which the Bolsheviks were aiming to send a sizeable delegation, would not resolve the problem it was due to debate — the question of the government. He expressed his belief that the Mensheviks and SRs would weight the conference in favour of the petty bourgeoisie. It would deceive the peasants and the workers. At the same time the authority of Bolshevism was increasing all of the time. He wrote:

"We have the advantage of certain victory, for the people are already near to exhaustion and after showing them the importance of our leadership in the 'Kornilov days', and then offering the bloc members a compromise and having it refused by them amidst vacillation on their part which has continued ever since, we are giving the whole people a sure way out."

That way out was a Bolshevik gov-

ernment which could only be installed by smashing the reformist leadership and the whole bourgeois state apparatus out of the way. All the efforts of the Bolsheviks should be directed towards the factories and barracks, not the Democratic Conference.

• Lenin's Ultimatum

He argued that the Democratic Conference should be told that if it does not accept the Bolshevik programme in full then there will be an insurrection.

Lenin's new course hit the CC like a bombshell. Copies of the letters were destroyed for fear that they might get beyond the CC. Nobody, at that stage, favoured an immediate rising. The Bolshevik plans for the Democratic Conference had been framed along the lines of the On Compromises policy. The declaration to the conference called on the conciliators to break with the bourgeoisie and transfer power into the hands of the soviets. It addressed a series of demands to the conciliators but not, as Lenin argued, in the form of an ultimatum.

The Democratic Conference, which opened on 14 September, was itself a factor in winning more Bolsheviks over to Lenin's insurrectionary views. He proved right as to its composition. Delegations were carefully weighted and on the day the Bolsheviks — increasingly a majority in the soviets — were in a tiny majority at the conference. There were 532 SRs (of whom 71 were Lefts), 530 Mensheviks (only 56 Internationalists amongst them) and 134 Bolsheviks. The urban working class areas were grossly under-represented.

With such a composition the conference unsurprisingly voted for yet another coalition between the soviet parties and the Kadets who, only a few weeks before, had worked hand in glove with Kornilov. The conference went on to establish a council, a parliament, which was there merely to advise the Provisional Government.

This experience convinced Trotsky and Sverdlov that 'All power to the soviets' could now only be achieved against the conciliators. It became for them a slogan for an uprising. By the middle of the conference they were moving visibly closer to Lenin's position.



• No Going Back

The dispute over the rising now took the form of a dispute over whether or not the Bolsheviks should boycott the pre-parliament. Trotsky favoured such a boycott and fought for it in the CC. He won 9-8 but the closeness of the vote prompted the CC to consult the Bolshevik delegation at the Democratic Conference. The delegation very much represented the regional and city committee men rather than the party rank and file. They tended to lean to the right. To Trotsky and Lenin's extreme annoyance they voted 77-50 in favour of participating in the pre-parliament. Lenin wrote:

"Trotsky was for the boycott. Bravo Comrade Trotsky! Boycottism was defeated in the Bolshevik group at the Democratic Conference. Long

live the boycott. We cannot and must not under any circumstances reconcile ourselves to participation... There is not the slightest doubt that there are noticeable vacillations at the top of our party that may become ruinous."

Nevertheless, the tide in the Bolshevik Party was turning in Lenin's favour. His letters had become known about in wider circles of the party. Fresh forces were elbowing their way into the debate supporting Lenin's



• Lenin rallies the support of workers

line. His impatience — even his threat to resign from the CC — was slowly bearing fruit. The first victory came when the CC, on 5 October, finally decided to boycott the toothless parliament. This act announced Bolshevism's conviction that the future of the revolution now lay exclusively in the struggle for soviet power. As Trotsky wrote:

"We left in order to say that only soviet power can raise up the slogan of peace and toss it over the heads of the international bourgeoisie to the proletariat of the entire world. Long live the direct and open struggle for revolutionary power in the country."

That walk out received the virtually unanimous endorsement of factory

workers. The resolution was clear: 'Recognising that an armed uprising is inevitable, and the time fully ripe, the Central Committee instructs all party organisations to be guided accordingly and to decide all practical questions from this standpoint.'

The resolution was adopted 10-2. The two vacillators were close comrades of Lenin's, Zinoviev and Kame-

nev.

• Strikebreakers

While their action in opposing the rising could be explained as a mistake and while their campaign to reverse the decision of 16 October in the party was a breach of democratic centralism, their next move was, as Lenin said, strike-breaking. In an article in Gorky's non-party paper, *Novaya Zhizn*, Kamenov publicly declared his opposition to the CC decision for a rising. He did so even though that decision had not been published for obvious security reasons. Kamenov was, in effect, giving Kerensky advance notice of the Bolshevik plan.

Lenin was resolute in carrying through the struggle against the vacillators, who had now turned into strike-breakers. Zinoviev had acceded to Kamenov performing this act of treachery and was branded as co-responsible by Lenin who demanded their expulsion from the party. As it turned out they were not thrown out. Stalin even published an editorial note on the affair criticising Lenin's tone and solidifying with Zinoviev. But, with this action, Zinoviev and Kamenov destroyed their chances of reversing the party's decision for insurrection.

• Trotsky's Preparations

For a month Lenin, urging immediate insurrection, had remained in a minority within the Bolshevik leadership and finally won out. Trotsky, agreeing with Lenin that the Bolsheviks should organise the insurrection, differed on the details. More in touch with the political mood of the capital, especially the Army, he put forward a plan for the uprising to coincide with the opening of the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets, which was

timed for October 15th, but then delayed for ten days by the frightened, and by this time unrepresentative, Executive Committee of the soviets.

Co-incidentally the Mensheviks and SRs of the Petrograd Soviet handed the Bolsheviks a channel for the insurrectionary preparations. In early October they had called for the creation of a "Committee of Revolutionary Defence" to work with general staff to solve the military problems of Petrograd, to persuade unwilling troops to fight.

It was this body which the Bolsheviks, now leading the Petrograd Soviet, took over, and, with the aid of the Left SRs, transformed into a revolutionary instrument, the Military Revolutionary Committee.

The MRC had a double role. It had to prepare the uprising whilst deceiving the provisional Government that nothing untoward was happening.

While Trotsky publicly insisted that the MRC had only a defensive role, the Committee was carrying out an intensive campaign of revolutionary propaganda among the mass of workers, neutralising any residual support for their government.

The real spearhead of the rising was to be the Red Guards. During February and again in August thousands of guns had been distributed in the working class districts. Now the Red Guard was rapidly expanded until some 26 000 workers were organised. Each factory collectively decided whether to enroll and then received training from sympathetic soldiers.

The Provisional Government was now virtually without support — only the officer cadets and a bourgeois Women's battalion remained in support — but it blithely went its sleepwalking way. "I only wish they would come out, and I will then put them down", Kerensky boasted to the British Ambassador.

• Seizure of Power

When on the night of 24-5 October, they did 'come out' (*vystupenie* in Russian), resistance was minimal. Within a few hours Red Guards had occupied all key buildings and positions. Only around the Winter Palace were there a few casualties — all on the insurgents' side. The workers showed a naive leniency towards captured generals and officers, simply requiring a paper promise before releasing them.

On the night of the 25th the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets met. Delegates had travelled from all localities and, as expected the Bolsheviks formed a majority. A new executive was elected: 14 Bolsheviks, 7 SRs, 3 Mensheviks and one other. The right-wing SRs and Mensheviks promptly walked out of the Congress followed by the taunt of Trotsky that they were about to deposit themselves in the dustbin of history.

Right from the inception of the workers' republic these 'democrats' refused to recognise the revolutionary legality of the new state. Many of them ended up with the counter-revolutionary White Guards.

Having won proletarian leadership, the Bolsheviks seized state power. The next evening the Provisional Workers' and Peasants' Government presented itself to the Congress of Soviets. American journalist John Reid described the scene:

"It was 18.40 when the thundering wave of cheers announced the entrance of the Presidium with Lenin — great Lenin — among them... Gripping the edge of the reading stand, letting his little winking eyes travel over the crowd he stood there waiting, apparently oblivious to the long rolling ovation which lasted for several minutes... 'WE SHALL NOW PROCEED TO CONSTRUCT THE SOCIALIST ORDER'"

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THE SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY of the Gulf War between Iran and Iraq has been marked by Imperialism's direct military intervention in the region. On Oct 19th US ships destroyed an Iranian sea platform. A month earlier, helicopter gunships blasted the *Iran Ajr* without warning, killing four of its crew and capturing the rest.

The "Great Satan's" show of fire-power in the Gulf inferno marks a new stage in the conflict: imperialism has, over the last few months, assembled a massive war fleet in the area. Over 70 ships from the navies of the USA, Britain, France, Italy, Belgium and Holland, all with their gun turrets and missiles pointed at Iran, constitute the biggest naval task force since the second imperialist World War. What is at stake for them in the Iran-Iraq war? To answer this it is necessary to understand the complex evolution of that war since September 1980.

• Iranian Revolution

In February 1979 an insurrection in Iran toppled the Shah whose brutal regime was openly identified by the masses as the puppet of imperialism. However, the working class and the oppressed were cruelly robbed of the spoils of victory. In the absence of a Trotskyist party, capable of winning the working class to the perspective of Permanent Revolution and workers' power, Khomeini secured complete leadership of the mass movement and transformed the revolution into its opposite — blood drenched counter-revolution.

Economically, it meant the destabilisation of an area that produces 90% of the West's lifeblood — oil. Politically it robbed imperialism of its second most powerful military ally in the Middle East, one that policed the Gulf in the south and the borders of the USSR in the north. At the time imperialism was incapable of countering this blow to its stability. Its one military intervention — the attempt to rescue the US embassy staff in Tehran — ended in a humiliating fiasco.

• Iraq War Welcomed

It was in this context that Saddam Hussein's Iraq invaded Iran. It was a blatant attempt to do imperialism a service by delivering a death blow to the still simmering revolution and re-establishing stability in the area.

Iraq's invasion was unambiguously welcomed in the west. The US bosses' mouthpiece, the Wall Street Journal stated:

"With revolutionary Iran creating so much tension in the Middle East, Washington would clearly welcome any role that the Iraqis might play in stabilising the Persian Gulf".

Saddam Hussein was, quite consciously, seeking to replace the Shah, as the policeman for imperialism in the Gulf. His trajectory since 1978 had been away from his former ally, the USSR, and towards the west. Oil, Iraq's key export, had a market in the west, not in the USSR.

What was at stake, therefore, in September 1980, was the defence of Iran from attack by a pro-imperialist Iraq. The gains of the Iranian revolution — now obliterated by Khomeini — such as the 40-hour week, the allocation of profits to workers, limited

elements of workers' control, were worth defending against a regime openly committed to their destruction. The re-establishment of stability on imperialism's terms was worth preventing. For these reasons revolutionaries — while not giving Khomeini any political support at all — were obliged to defend Iran militarily. Yet, two years into this war revolutionaries were equally obliged to end this position of a *military united front*. The defence of the Iranian revolution was no longer at stake by July 1982. More, the war had become thoroughly reactionary on both sides. Why?

At the outset of the war Iran's military apparatus was in tatters. The Iraqi army was able to occupy 700 square miles of Iranian territory with relative ease. But then they were halted not by the Iranian army but by a 'levee en masse', a mobilisation of the Iranian people. Reluctantly, the mullahs were obliged to allow armed workers to go to the front. Not only was the Iraqi invasion checked but, as the months wore on, the Iranians advanced. At this point new factors began to emerge. Realising the danger which the general mobilisation posed to their rule, the mullahs began their plans for an internal counter-revolutionary onslaught on those still benefiting from the gains of the revolution. Initially this took the form of a split in June 1981 within the regime between the 'liberal' bourgeois president Bani-Sadr and the Khomeini-



ites. However, the Khomeinists used this split to strike at the real threat to their regime — the working class.

Through the following year the mullahs consolidated a bloody grip on Iran, physically liquidating tens of thousands of opponents. During the same period victories at the front began to change the character of the war. In May and June 1982 the Iranian forces recaptured the last major outpost of Iraq in Iran, Khorramshahr. By late June the defensible war aim of Iran — the expulsion of Iraq — had been fulfilled. Iraq announced a ceasefire and withdrew all its troops from Iran. Yet, instead of ending the war Khomeini, realising the reactionary potential in keeping the Iranian masses' eyes transfixed on an external enemy, opted to continue the war.

In this context the IWG and Workers Power in Britain ceased to call for the defence of Iran. We argued — and continue to do so to this day — for the withdrawal of Iranian troops from Iraq, for an end to the reactionary war and for the Iranian workers to recog-

IMPERIALISM TRIES TO TAME IRAN

nise that their main enemy is at home, as had always been the case for the Iraqi workers.

The mullahs' rhetoric was not matched by military prowess. The human wave assaults they ordered led to thousands dead, in return for a snail's pace advance into Iraq. Cynically exploiting the Shi'ite celebration of martyrdom, the Ayatollah maintained a fragile popular base for his regime by keeping the war going. Saddam turned the tables on Khomeini and appealed to Arab chauvinism to rally the Iraqi population to a dogged defence against the Persians. Iran's oil wealth and Iraq's subsidies from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia provided the cash needed to keep the carnage going. The war had turned into a horrifying re-run of the slaughter of the first imperialist world war. Almost half a million people have died; more than that have been maimed for life.

• Saddam's Strategy

Iraq's attempt to break the deadlock has led to the new situation. Saddam knows Iraq cannot win the war. His aim, therefore, is to enlist imperialism's help to bring Iran to the negotiating table. His strategy is currently enjoying a degree of success.

In July the UN Security Council passed resolution 598 which called for an immediate ceasefire, a withdrawal of armies to pre-war borders and the establishment of an impartial body to allocate blame (and therefore reparations) for the start of the war. Indeed Iran went so far as to tell the UN's Perez de Cuellar that it would observe an informal ceasefire provided Algeria and Sweden were represented on a UN adjudicating body. How did Iraq achieve this concession from Iran and what are the real chances for an end to the war?

• Iraqi Exocets

Iraq has always enjoyed one advantage in the war — air superiority. Courtesy of France it has a fleet of between 80 and 100 Super Etendard jets — the Exocet machines. Since 1984 it has used this air power to conduct a tanker war. All ships in the Gulf carrying Iranian oil have been regarded as legitimate targets. This, hoped Hussein, would have two results.

First, it would hurt Iran economically since all of its oil is transported through the Gulf's shipping lanes. Iraq on the other hand exports its oil via a pipeline through Turkey, a target Iran dare not hit.

More important for Hussein was the second result, namely goading Iran to hit back by attacking ships carrying Kuwaiti and Saudi oil to the imperialist west. By turning the shipping lanes of the Gulf into a graveyard for the tankers Iraq hopes to tempt US imperialism to play a more active role in taming Iran.

• Containment

The imperialist US, however, smarting from the bloody nose it had received in Lebanon, was more anxious to try to do a deal with the Iranians in a bid to find some potential 'moderate' friends. Containment of the war became the USA's central

objective. Hence, while it supplied Iraq with intelligence that enabled it to bomb Iranian targets, it supplied Iran with weapons and spare parts — 2,000 TOW anti-tank missiles, for example.

Provided enough oil continued to flow through the Gulf, Britain and France were content with this policy of containment. It would lead, in Henry Kissinger's words, to both countries losing the war. Exhausted regimes would then become pushovers for a renewed drive by imperialism to establish stability in the Gulf.

• Aggression

The policy of containment lasted two years. It exploded in Reagan's face when the Irangate scandal blew. The anti-Iranian rhetoric was shown to be hot air. The Presidency became rapidly discredited. Ironically Reagan's embarrassment led to success in Saddam's bid to bring imperialism into confrontation with Iran.

To rescue the Presidency — that is to ensure that the essentials of Reaganite policy are continued after he goes — an 'adjustment', as the State Department called it, was required in the Gulf.

In February of this year Reagan embarked on the course that led to armed clashes in September and the destruction of an Iranian sea platform on Oct 19th.

Fearful of Soviet influence after Kuwait invited Gorbachev's assistance with oil transport, Reagan authorized the reflagging of eleven Kuwaiti tankers to place them under US protection and started sending the fleet to protect them.

It was Iraq which exoceted the USS Stark, killing yet more US servicemen, but it was Iran that the President sent his ships to attack. When Iraq broke the informal ceasefire that had existed in the tanker war for over a month, on 29 August, it was Iran's mines that were declared to be the major source of tension. US imperialism was now in the Gulf, bringing much of Europe in its train, in order to force Iran to accept peace on its terms. Containment was replaced by unabashed aggression against Iran.

For its part the USSR, fearful of the instability associated with the Islamic Republic and mindful of the influence of Islam in its own southern Republics, was content to go along with the imperialist attempts to tame Iran.

• American Corpses

Imperialism's chances of saving Saddam's head by bringing Iran to the negotiating table are far from certain. The Gulf remains a powder keg.

During the lull in the tanker war Iran was able to earn a fortune in oil revenue. Exports in August were earning Iran 20 million dollars more than the previous year. Moreover, Iran knows that while it cannot compete with the imperialist armada in a sea battle, it can forestall a land attack by imperialism by re-unifying its war-weary population against the Great Satan.

The cost of a land attack would be far too high for the USA, Britain or France to contemplate. Iran has already mobilised 40,000 'seekers of

martyrdom' in the Persian Gulf. And the Iranian President Khomeini said after receiving the bodies of those killed in the US attack on the *Iran Ajr*:

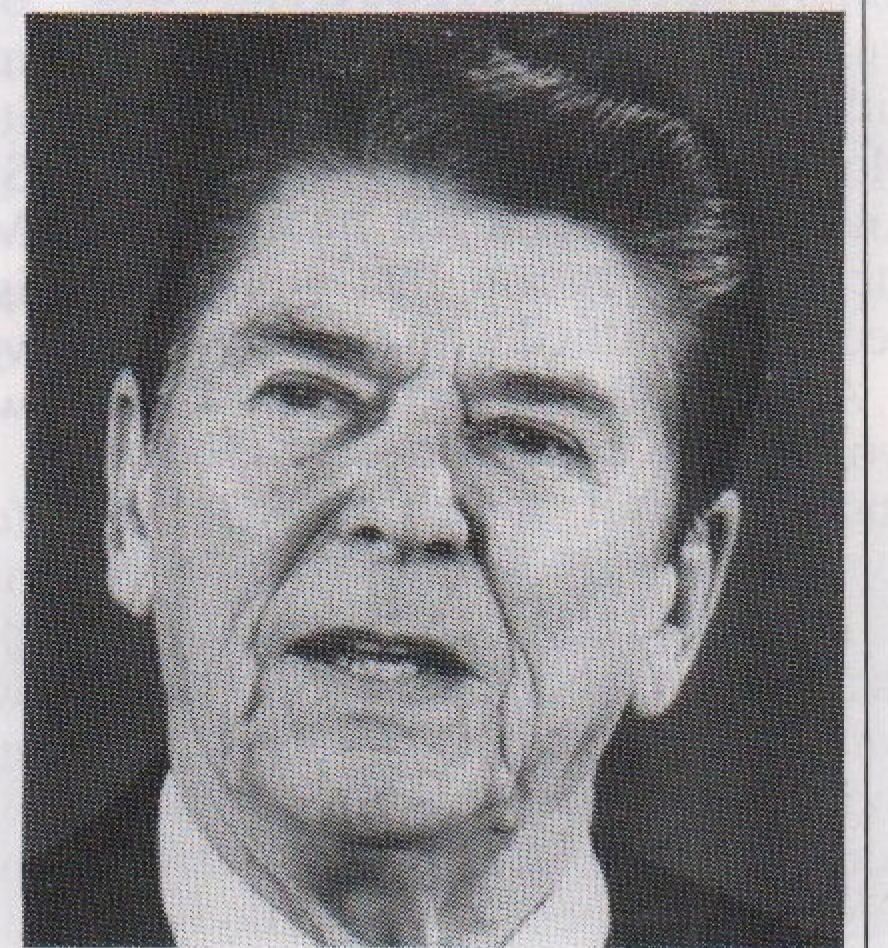
"Our nation takes delivery of the bodies of its young martyrs, and martyrdom is an honour for us. But what will you have to say tomorrow when you hand over the corpses of young Americans to their families?"

A sobering reminder of the current constraints Reagan's gunboat diplomacy faces.

• Gulf Alliance

In the present situation revolutionaries need to fight for clear policies that can weaken both imperialism and the reactionary dictatorships in Baghdad and Tehran. Imperialism's present quest for peace through negotiation is aimed at weakening Iran but not at strengthening Iraq. Saddam has failed in his attempt to win the role of policeman.

The US and Britain favour an alliance of the Gulf states, under the political domination of the Saudis and backed up by the US navy as a counter weight to Iran and as a means of keeping the vital oil flow going. Through peace they hope that sections of the Iranian ruling class can be brought to co-existence in the Gulf and the blocking of any further Soviet



influence in the area.

Thus, at the moment, the two conflicts of Iran with Iraq and imperialism with Iran have not yet become one and the same. Of course, the potential for imperialism to strike a military deal with Iraq exists. Frustration with Iran could push the US in this direction. If such a development does occur then, as in 1980, Iraq's war would become again a proxy war by imperialism, probably taking the form of a renewed offensive equipped and logistically supported by the US and Saudi Arabia. In that situation the defence of Iran by socialists would once again be placed on the agenda.

• Socialist Position

At present, however, in the war between Iran and Iraq, we demand the withdrawal of Iranian troops from Iraq and an immediate end to the war.

To achieve this the masses of both countries need to be rallied to a revolutionary struggle against their rulers. However, in the continuing conflict between Iran and the imperialist navies we stand unequivocally for the defence of Iran.

Success for the US, Britain or France would be success for imperialism's strategy of asserting its power over all semi-colonial regions that dare to challenge it. It must not be allowed to happen.

Imperialism must be driven out of the Gulf, lock, stock and barrel. Its calls for arms embargoes against Iran must be opposed. Such calls are an attempt to disarm Iran in its conflict with the imperialist powers. Imperialist arms embargoes will not bring peace to the masses of the Gulf.

Proletarian revolution and the defeat of imperialism will!

Class War Prisoner

Two years after his arrest, miner militant, Eleuterio Gutierrez is still in jail in Bolivia awaiting sentence. Information has recently arrived from Bolivia that the court is likely to impose a long prison sentence for supposed theft from COMIBOL, the Bolivian national mining company. In a recent statement on the case, the Permanent Assembly for Human Rights in Bolivia has declared:

"The Permanent Assembly believes that the charge has been trumped up in order to

blame someone for the theft of the instruments."

It is urgent that we step up the pressure on the Bolivian government to prevent the victimisation of this miner comrade. All trade union and labour movement bodies, especially those who have taken up the case before, should immediately send letter or telegrams of protest to:

Palacio de Justicia,
2do Juzgado de Partido en lo Penal
Calle La Plata Esq Ayacucho
Oruro — Bolivia.

Republicanism - All Classes Together?

THIS MONTH, Sinn Féin holds its annual Ard Fheis - one year on from the much heralded radical decision in 1986 to abandon the "principle" of abstentionism towards the Dáil. The overwhelming majority in support of the decision underlies how far control of the organisation now lies with the Adams-Morrison-Mc Guinness left wing of the Republican movement. Their victory represented the culmination of a process of radicalisation going back to the mid and late seventies

The isolation and demoralisation felt after the breakdown of the cease-fire inspired by the old guard in 1975 had propelled the younger northern activists, inside and outside the prisons, to the conclusion that the conspiratorial armed struggle of a few hundred guerillas could not, in itself, hope to defeat British imperialism. The need for an extended active social base within the minority community was, they argued, paramount.

From 1974 onwards, the left embarked on the task of developing the programmatic and political basis through which the IRA armed struggle would be securely and permanently anchored in a militant and mobilised anti-Unionist population. The IRA would, in the dictum of Mao, swim in a republican sea. The consolidation and growth of the Republican movement under the Adams leadership was initiated first through the impact of the mass struggles around the hunger strikes. These provided the spring board for the turn to the election arena and community politics where, by 1983, Sinn Féin had polled 35% of the nationalist vote in the North.

The decision last year to abandon abstentionism was, it was argued, the key to growth and consolidation in the working class communities in the South - an electoral and political breakthrough at the expense of the bogus republicans in Fianna Fáil. As we approach the coming conference, Sinn Féin leaders and many in the movement, remain convinced that this course is the right one to further "broaden the battlefield". The spearhead continues to be the armed struggle to force Britain to withdraw, and the establishment of a "democratic socialist" state. As Gerry Adams has recently declared

"what is needed in Ireland, especially in the 26 counties, is the development of an anti-imperialist movement....The programme of such a movement would appeal to all those capable of taking a national stand and would require a multi-sided campaign of national regeneration - an Irish Ireland movement to offset, especially in the 26 counties, the neo-colonial and anti-national mentality which exists there". (Adams, The Politics of Irish Freedom, p. 135)

The IWG believes the analysis and perspectives of the Republican movement to be profoundly mistaken and doomed to failure. Beneath the socialist rhetoric, they do not go beyond the limits of anti-imperialist nationalism. The results of such policies if carried to their full

logic, as evidenced by Adams' statement, would mean a complete subordination of the class struggle against Irish capitalism in favour of a policy of all classes together for the goal of Irish national independence

Why do we say this? Is it that we think republicans, the majority of whom are working class people, consciously and deliberately are pursuing a policy which could lead to class collaboration with Fianna Fáil and the SDLP? No, we fully recognise that the majority of republicans seriously and sincerely want their struggle and sacrifices to result in a vastly different kind of society from the horrors of present day Irish capitalism. Our characterisation lies with the nature of the Republican programme.

"You cannot have socialism in a British colony such as exists in the 6 counties or in a neo-colony, such as exists in the 26 counties. You must have your own national government with the power to institute the political and economic changes which constitute socialism. Furthermore, there cannot be a credible movement for socialism in Ireland while the British connection divides workers in the 6 counties and while partition prevents a unity of working class interests". (Adams, The Politics of Irish Freedom, p. 128)

The programme of the Republican movement embodies, as a practical guide to action and everyday struggle, the strictly nationalist aim of the creation of a secular, self-sufficient, independent and sovereign 32 county state. As any honest reading of Adams makes perfectly clear, it is the pre-requisite, the first necessary step to be achieved before any step towards socialism can even begin.

Such a programme historically represented the interests of the rising Irish bourgeoisie for their own state in the early period of its development in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. The defection of that Presbyterian-led bourgeoisie to the Union left the task of national freedom and independence with the emerging Catholic farmer-bourgeoisie and sections of the oppressed rural and urban petit-bourgeoisie. By the twentieth century, the emergence, however unevenly, of the Irish working class, brought sharply forward the question Connolly tried to answer of which class and around which programme could the nation win real independence and freedom

The 1916 Rising was led by sections of the urban petit-bourgeoisie, along with a section of the Irish working class. They united around a radical programme for national independence which obscured the key question of which class will hold the power. It concealed behind its nationalism the antagonistic class interests of Irish workers and small farmers and the class interests of private property. It subordinated the interests of the propertyless to the private property holders. The fateful sell-out to imperialism in 1921 by the leaders of a section of the Republican movement, representing the most powerful elements of town and

country, should blind no one to the fact that those who opposed them held no fundamentally different class programme. The whole history of republicanism since then is one of trying to resolve this issue and failing, e.g. the Republican Congress.

Today the Provisional Republican movement, with a much more proletarian composition and a much more consciously socialist outlook, aims to build an independent non-aligned united Ireland with a mixed i.e. capitalist economy, free from imperialism in an imperialist world. Only then the fight for socialism. It still has not resolved the class question! Even the most casual acquaintance with the record of nationalist struggles across the globe since 1945 would show how impossible and utopian such a task is. For the victories of these national struggles against colonialism, led in the most part, by people who proclaimed themselves "democratic socialists", resulted in deepened dependency to western imperialism or Stalinism - backwardness, poverty, exploita-

with a perspective of world socialism. The Republican movement's 'independent Ireland' cannot even be construed as a step in that direction, not to say a half-way house. For if the question of what class rules is not solved in struggle to reconstruct the nation, then the old ruling class interests seize the chance to enchain once more the exploited and oppressed.

The consequence of this position is spelt out by Adams.

"The true socialist will be an active supporter of the republican character of a national independence movement. He or she will realise that unless this character is maintained and unless the most radical social forces are in the leadership of the independence struggle, then inevitably it must fail or compromise. This classical view of the matter contrasts with the ultra-left view which counterposes republicanism and socialism and which breaks up the unity of the national independence movement by putting all its socialist demands, that have no possibility of



Former Vice President of Sinn Féin, Phil Flynn of the LGPSU, celebrating the "Programme for National Recovery" with Haughey, of which Flynn was one of the architects. Is this where republican politics must lead?

tion, oppression, the endless rule of dictatorships or one-party machines adept at fostering or maintaining tribal or ethnic divisions.

The prospect of state control of taxation and foreign exchange controls about which Gerry Adams glibly speaks, is utterly inadequate to establish a viable and independent economy. Adams' view, therefore, that "Irish Republicanism is not a term which defines a system of society in a way that socialism does" (p. 130) is a deliberate attempt to obscure the class nature of all republicanism and the property relations it implicitly defends - private property. Economic and social development has been possible historically only as part of an international division of labour and production ever since capitalism created a world economy. Continued development by imperialist capitalism on its terms or the creation of a world socialist order are the only historical alternatives

Instead, the fight to create a workers state in Ireland, in the teeth of imperialism, can only be undertaken

being achieved until real independence has been won". (Adams, The Politics of Irish Freedom p. 135)

If socialism is not on the agenda, if no effective trade union movement or any other struggles can be built or fought for this side of the Irish Republic, then what can be the role of the working class or other oppressed groups? It can only be to join the "Irish Ireland" movement on a radical petty-bourgeois programme for an independent Republic. And what of the most immediate needs of the exploited and oppressed; as day in day out, workers face increasing attacks, health and social services are cut, both states enforce their repressive laws and policies, women are driven back into domestic toil and sexual oppression, and youths are forced to emigrate. Are these not immediate opportunities for socialists to relate to in order to build the conscious organised leadership of a class party? Are these not the concrete focus for a programme that links immediate conditions to the goal of social, political and armed revolution against both states?

At the SWM-Sinn Féin public debate, attended by over 200 on 2nd Oct, the SWM organisers appealed to everyone present to come to the Saturday and Sunday sessions of their 'weekend of Marxism'.

Their attempt to affect the appearance of fraternal and democratic openness to debate, however, transpired to be a fraud, for on Saturday and Sunday two IWG members were refused admission to sessions and two more were ejected after stating their political affiliations.

When an explanation was demanded on Saturday morning it was refused. As admitted frankly by one SWMer, the purpose of the weekend of Marxism was to recruit to and build the SWM. They felt that the IWG would disrupt that purpose by making political arguments against the politics of the SWM.

For as long as the IWG has existed it has taken debate and polemic seriously. It has therefore attended as many SWM public meetings as possible. It is genuinely held differences of political programme that divide the left, not mere organisational loyalties. Organisational manoeuvres to prevent honest debate on those differences is a recipe for sectarianism, not for regrouping the best militants in the nucleus of a revolutionary party.

Never once has the SWM been given cause to, nor has it ever before, ejected or banned an IWG member from any of its publicly advertised meetings.

We therefore condemn without reservation the action of the SWM. We regard it an affront to the norms of political democracy in the socialist movement.

SWM claims to stand in a tradition of revolutionary opposition to Stalinism and bureaucracy in the working class movement. What evidence of this in practice can they give to anyone, as a small group leading no sections of the class in real struggle? Only their own behaviour. And in this instance it was a shameless and sectarian denial of open democratic debate in practice while publicly lying and pretending that this was the basis of their Marxism weekend.

They thus undermine their claim to stand in the tradition of true working class political democracy, without which all of their revolutionary aspirations are worthless. •

The Republican movement is firmly opposed to such a perspective which no amount of electioneering or community politics can hide. It amounts to a conscious rejection of the revolutionary socialist road. It is no accident that on foot of last year's decision to abandon abstentionism the Republican Movement announced that it wanted no conflict with the southern state. This was a declaration of social peace with the bourgeois-national exploiters and imperialist capitalism in the south

Even in the Six Counties we now find Sinn Féiners, as an answer to unemployment and discrimination, calling on Britain to bolster local capitalism - "to provide the necessary incentives and infrastructure to attract proposed new enterprises in the most disadvantaged areas" (APRN 41, p.10, proposal 10 on discrimination).

Sinn Féin cannot continue to ignore the irrelevance of their current perspectives to the most pressing needs of the working class in its social and economic struggles. Their pan-nationalist illusions in sections of Fianna Fáil, SDLP and the Church - witness the present anti-extradition campaign - not only fails to mobilise real anti-unionist resistance but it blurs the class lines between the working masses and the unprecedented coalition of rapacious exploiters led by Fianna Fáil.

These are the issues Sinn Féin militants must face.

Extradition- the enemy is Fianna Fáil

Irish
Workers
Group

Class Struggle

The British government has contemptuously dismissed the whining of bourgeois nationalist politicians that the Anglo Irish agreement commits it to any gesture of reform of the six county diplock courts. Few in Ireland, however, can seriously doubt that it is still the intention of the Fianna Fail government to implement the extradition act. Any hesitation in the light of Tory intransigence simply postpones the inevitable. It is merely a matter of timing.

For the Tories are acutely aware that the Anglo Irish Agreement was a major concession to the Irish ruling class, faced as it was with the explosion of electoral support for Sinn Féin during and after the hunger strikes. It was a lifeline to the SDLP and the southern political establishment.

In conceding it the Tories risked the wrath and fury of Loyalism in the North - a threat they believe they have successfully faced down. The have no wish to hand the Loyalists the chance to arouse themselves from the defeat they have suffered. It is part of the deal the British government believe, for Haughey to similarly face down whatever opposition might emerge in the South.

The implementation of the extradition act will create the conditions for republicans living in the south to be brought before a judicial system second only to Bothsa's South Africa in its lack of elementary rights and repressive tyranny. Whether or not Haughey decides to delay its implementation, therefore, should be of minor significance to those concerned with building a mass campaign to stop extradition.

The IWG believe that the present national extradition campaign, led by Sinn Féin is being built on sand - or worse. It is founded on the illusion that the Fianna Fail party's "rank and file" can be mobilised to force the

Haughey leadership to repeal the act. The campaign strategy amounts to little more than arousing the 'national conscience' of Fianna Fail councillors, TDs, priests and respectable what-have-you against its leadership - "national traitors."

This view of Fianna Fail as a dual party of apostate leaders and a solid republican "rank and file" is a Sinn Féin fiction.

No thinking militant in Sinn Féin can swallow it for a second. Even Republican News, weekly awash with accounts of the latest worthy recruit to the campaign is forced to recognise the obvious:

"The principle (of extradition - IWG) has long been conceded and what remains is the timing of implementation" *Republican News*, 22 Oct page 1.

If this is the case then why hasn't the republican "rank and file" of Fianna Fail already mobilised against Haughey's outrageous about-turn on

Photo by Derek Speirs/Report

party policy when he assumed government office? Do Sinn Féin seriously suggest that the vast bulk of Fianna Fail members don't know or support the real priorities and interests of their party's leadership - the defence of Irish capitalism and its good relationship with British and world imperialism.

The Irish working class is paying a savage price just now for its illusions that Fianna Fail is somehow "its" party. The massive cuts in health, education, and attacks upon living standards, jobs etc by the Fianna Fail government has the full support of its membership. Likewise on the issue of extradition.

Certainly as in the H-Blocks struggle a number of Fianna Failers can be found to conveniently utter a few words of condemnation of their leaders. But this largely opportunist manoeuvring cannot be the basis for a serious campaign to challenge Haughey. In fact, as in the H-Block

struggle, it merely strengthens illusions in Fianna Fail whilst simultaneously preventing the basis of a real strategy from being developed.

The Irish working class alone has a real interest - a class interest - in defending republicans from its own class enemy - imperialist capitalism.

- Only the fight to mobilise Irish workers for industrial action can lay the basis for uniting workplaces and communities in a fist of collective strength and power to defeat the extradition plans of Haughey and King.

- Raise resolutions in workplace and trade union sections!

- For real trade union action to stop extradition!

- Demand that Sinn Féin back workers action as the key!

- For an open democratic national conference to build a real fight against extradition and repression!



For legal access to Abortion Information

On Saturday the 10th of October a National meeting of activists was held in Dublin to discuss the new counselling service being set up by the clinics campaign.

It was attended by a mere handful of people, true testimony to the fact that the campaign is in tatters, numbers drastically reduced since last March's conference.

There was plenty of hand-wringing that this was so but no questioning of what went wrong: no wondering whether the strategy - pushed through undemocratically and defended again and again by the leadership - of limiting the campaign to building a semi-clandestine information network was at fault.

The 1983 Amendment paved the way for the Hamilton judgement of

December 1986 - a Court ruling that made the giving of information on abortion an incontestable offence. This precipitated the closure of the two abortion referral clinics in Dublin. Women are still travelling to Britain for abortions but they do so now without the benefit of advice, support or counselling. This Ruling was a blow for women; a setback; a new defeat.

The obvious goal of any campaign set up to counter this defeat should have been to make information and counselling legal again.

Amazingly, the Defend the Clinics Campaign, headed by Peoples Democracy and a number of feminists completely turned their backs on this most important goal - of making the services legal. But how else could the legal right to abortion information be established without a real fight for

Repeal of the 8th Amendment - the basis of the Judgement.

Yet despite all the signs of decay and demoralisation the leaders rejected all criticism at the conference and continued with their old failed line. Instead of mobilising women, students and trade unionists in a fighting militant campaign around political aims including the goal of Repeal, in tandem with more immediate and very important objectives of defiance and defence, these misleaders have led the campaign to a dead end by focussing all energies on clandestine information giving; now on training volunteers for counselling - very important activities but not geared to ending illegality. Moreover they do not face the problem of defence for women now about to put themselves on the line by regularly offering counselling services and

Dear Comrades,

I missed the point of your piece on Sinn Féin and the Clinics Defence Campaign. Could you please explain?

R. Ascal
Edinburgh

The point was that the Campaign wrote to many individuals and organisations asking them to sign a declaration of support. The bottom line, the last sentence of the declaration, committed whoever signed it to publicly declare that they were prepared to provide in-

formation about abortion facilities to women who might want it. Tom Hartley, for Sinn Féin, claimed that this particular public commitment would "contravene" the policy adopted by Sinn Féin on abortion. But the Sinn Féin conference rejection of abortion rights did not deny the right of women to have information about abortion. How can Sinn Féin possibly reconcile support for the Clinics with Hartley's letter? Sinn Féin refuses to join the ranks of the many who are prepared to give out information and telephone numbers from which women can get non-directive counselling! Defending the Clinics means defending the provision of such information! That's what the High Court tried to stop in closing down the Clinics services!

Abortion Advice is available: 084 226117 / 031 251 6332

abortion referral

In view of the fact that a new regular counselling service is to be set up in November, an Irish Workers group member moved a resolution for a conference of activists to defend this service from inevitable attacks from the Right. This resolution must be acted on to mobilise activists in trade unions and in communities in a serious campaign around Defiance, Defence and Repeal.

For the right-wing SPUC are already waiting in the wings. They are sharpening their claws as they scrutinise abortion information published recently by UCDs student union. At the same time RTE is set to ban all live discussion of abortion as a direct response to the Hamilton judgement. Media workers must absolutely oppose such censorship!

- DEFY THE RULING!
- DEFEND THE COUNSELLERS!
- REPEAL THE 8TH AMENDMENT!

serious reading at the Labour Party conference in Cork

— photo Derek Speirs/Report

